

# Documents And "Their" Actors: An Empirical Pathway For Power-Sensitive Frame Analysis Of Political Communication

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## Abstract

*Framing has been termed a "fractured paradigm" by Robert Entman. Frames as media-text features are prime examples of coding complexity since frames may be regarded as factual media content or a loose extracted collection of data snippets docking at a specific theme or event. The potential of the concept for analyzing power relations within political communication is enormous and would benefit from further guiding information when working with CAQDAS. This paper seeks to provide an integral empirical perspective, and it includes suggestions for code families, coding rules, and query examples within ATLAS.ti. Furthermore, it discusses issues like frame types, frame setting, and frame sending.*

*At its core, the paper joins text-based analysis with probing for the relevant actors' view via guideline interviews. By doing so, it connects actor and process-oriented aspects of frame analysis, following one prevailing approach on framing in communication science. It also advises a flexible theoretical docking, but opts for a concise network perspective on actor-document relations. The result of the paper is not quite an empirical blueprint but a collection of helpful yet optional procedures for frame analysis.*

## Key Words

*Frames, framing, power, attributions, content analysis, qualitative research, political communication, journalism*

## Introduction

Today, framing cannot be considered a concise approach. In recent years, it has been described as a "toolbox" or "bridging concept" in political communication, as well as a broad "horizon of meaning" of communication science. These wordings exemplify both the breadth and depth of the concept. Some works support the capability of framing to search for power-related issues and use it to track down relevant data through various forms of media investigation. Other threads neglect the relation between frames and the wider social power grid, mostly due to either inattentiveness towards issues like frame building and frame sponsorship, or else because framing is exclusively used to study media effects among audiences.

Consequently, an integral perspective which includes steps like content production and negotiation can be called a prerequisite for working with the latent power perspective of political communication. Connecting the concept of strategic frames and media frames with embedded actors, organizations, and the settings of mass media logic(s) will prove vital. Thus, this paper argues that power-sensitive frame analysis always requires collecting the relevant actors' view from interfaces of political communication through interviews. Furthermore, a transparent qualitative research strategy is necessary to cover common features of frame research, such as consistent code families and coding rules.

Modern CAQDAS like ATLAS.ti offer multiple ways to enhance the explorative and conceptual coding procedures necessary for analyzing such complex settings. Manageable empirical instructions are of high practical value here. We suggest a reflexive guideline within ATLAS.ti to embark into a qualitative frame analysis; specifically, a two-phase coding approach that combines deductive and inductive code families as well as interviews between the coding phases. While the function of the first run is primarily to filter

for significant frame elements (such as attributions or responsibilities at the sentence, paragraph and document level), the second coding enriches the outcome with the evaluation of the actors and further relational aspects.

By following this research path, frame analysis will prove a good match to prevailing conditions: Long-term cultural shifts often referred to as convergence and mediatisation have been at work refocusing empirical research on political communication on dynamic actor figurations. Starting with definitions and a brief comment on frames and framing research (section 2), this paper moves on to trace actor-document-relations, suggesting some go-to recommendations (section 3). It then provides ideas for coding rules, coding procedures, queries, and relational issues within ATLAS.ti (section 4). Finally, it points out possible ways to use the outcome of these projects (section 5).

### **Frames And Framing In Communication Science**

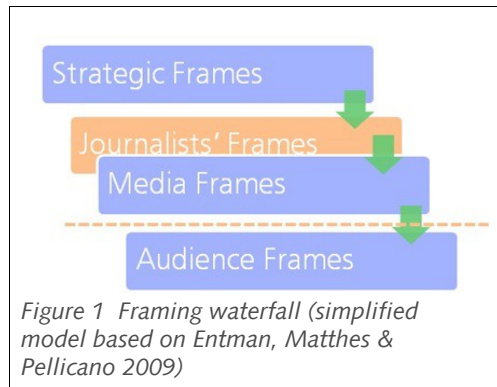
The history of the framing approach is a twofold one. It can be associated with the linguistic turn in social sciences, whose focus was on the recognition of language as a non-transparent, bendable communication tool. Erving Goffman, whose initial contribution was the primary-frameworks-approach, introduced the concept of frames; this was for him the basis for human scripts, role sensitivity and memory. He states, "the type of framework we employ provides a way of describing the event to which it is applied" (Goffman 1974: 24). Goffman differentiates between two kinds—a natural and a social framework of actors, filtering for sense-making occurrences. The natural framework is perceiving physical environmental happenings which would affect the actor whereas the social one is for intended, strategic, willing, power-related actions of actors or their discursive echoes. This second language-using framework sets a cornerstone for all power-related framing issues and started a rush of following approaches in social sciences, yet it is strengthened by the first one, as Goffman shows in a variety of face-to-face examples (ibid: 68ff.).

Communication science has not so much considered this sociological aspect of frames but focuses on the process of framing (Marcinkowski 2014). Robert Entman states in a well-known paper from 1993, that...

[t]o frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Entman 1993: 52)

He postulates that frames can provide these four things: They can label social problems, specify causes, convey moral assessments, and endorse remedies for those problems (Entman 2004; Matthes 2007: 240). Likewise, frames may point directly or indirectly at social actors and connect those with the mentioned problems, causes, moral standpoints, and treatments. In other words, they may help to exert power over named actors. In turn, exerting power in today's societies particularly requires framing "[...] in order to influence the attitudes that shape [...] behavior" (Entman 2010: 292). By means of frames, topics and the ways they are perceived can be spread via media text documents, whether they are pro-

duced as print or online texts or else are part of an audio-visual arrangement in a news-clip. Next to Entman's, several other attempts to tighten up the frame concept exist (e. g., Benford 1997; Matthes 2007; Scheufele 1999). However, framing remains multi-faceted and offers a variety of docking points, which is also appreciated by some (D'Angelo 2002; Potthoff 2012).



Aside from being accustomed to a certain disorder concerning the framing approach, most researchers would agree upon the frame in political communication: Starting at the production level, countless PR workers, press relation experts, politicians, and 'spin doctors' are defining frames according to their issues (Potthoff n.d.). These "strategic frames" are communicated to the journalists in this field, who also possess a set of frames, gained mostly from their training and professional work. Either they pass

on strategic frames without alteration (frame sending), or they change these frames according to their interpretations (frame setting). While "journalistic frames" are seen as rather stable, strategic frames are supposed to be in a state of constant flux (Matthes 2014: 36f.) in the sense of "throwing things at the wall to see what sticks." But, eventually, both meet up to form the content of texts as media frames. Finally, they reach recipients and may be collected as "audience frames." Apart from the latter kind—where frames are consumed in various ways and situations and therefore are more eligible to quantitative methods—frame research should begin in a qualitative fashion and kept connected with the central actors. Only when the circumstances of frame building (working day schedule, technical features, organizational embedding, etc.) are known may researchers assess a holistic understanding of these frames. As shown in Figure 1, the aforementioned can be visualized in a "waterfall model" of the framing process.

In this paper we would like to stress the connection of Goffman's actor-oriented understanding of frames and Entman's process-oriented view on framing. For this purpose, frames are to be defined as meaningful interpretations of relevant aspects of thematic issues, some of which are emphasized; others are neglected. Media discourse keeps these readings in a competitive framing process until they finally form the audience's opinion. During this process they are revised, altered, completed by actors who are aware that frames represent manifestations of interests, and therefore bear power. We loosely follow the work of Matthes here (ibid: 14, 55), agreeing also that framing can be described as one major bridging concept of communication science. It connects diverse strands of theoretical and methodological development, such as depicted in Figure 1: Professional frames above the dashed line, and audience frames underneath. Here, we will concentrate on above the line because research on audience frames—closely tied to the history of media effects studies—is more prone to representative, quantitative methods.

## Tracing Actor-document Relations To Improve Frame Analysis

When figuring out how to connect actor and process perspective in frame analysis, it soon becomes clear that the most important parts—documents and actors—are linked in a chequered power relation which can be traced even in philosophical discussion. ...which can be traced even in philosophical discussion. Foucault put it rather harshly when he first proclaimed the "end of man" as structuring force on the doorstep of postmodernism (1966). Barthes' premature—yet certainly not preposterous—claim of the "death of the author" (1974 [1967]) was a more specific articulation. But both were united in a certain skepticism, fostering thoughts about the estrangement of people from their textual output. This becomes understandable today with a side-glance on mass media discourse. Here, political journalists are only sometimes mentioned by name, whereas PR experts and press workers are normally not named at all. In addition to known or unknown authors, "media actors" are used within the texts; action or reception is attributed to them. Skepticism becomes understandable with a side-glance on mass media discourse. Political journalists are only sometimes mentioned by name, whereas PR experts and press workers are normally not named at all. In addition to known or unknown authors, there are always "media actors" used within the text to whom action or reception is attributed.

Actors as well as documents—and their relations—tend to be fairly unique. The work of journalists, for instance, is influenced by various factors like the media company they work for, the journalistic organization they are part of, the market position and publishing form of their media, news factors of the event the journalists are working on, discursive history or repertoire, the all-over communication culture, political framework for journalism, etc. The same applies to the other side of political communication where strategic frames are produced. To cope with this challenging field empirically, the following go-to recommendations will prove beneficial to consider actor-document relations:

- **Select actors at a retrievable social communication interface:** One possibility would be to ensure access to an institution which is working at such a social interface (Long 1992). Sometimes positions as research interns are offered at German ministries and *Bundestag* offices, and it would be a matter of negotiation to gain access to official documents and actors. An alternative would be to base research on publicly available texts, such as reports from the federal press conferences in Berlin and interviews with authors or journalists. To make things more transparent, researchers should decide on an interface that will persist for the foreseeable future. It is then likely that actor-document relations remain the same over a longer period of time.
- **Pay attention to document attributes:** For document analysis, Mayring (2002) recommends three criteria which are of particular interest for actor-document-relations as they strikingly represent power relations: a) Intention of documents: their purpose, their uni- or multidirectional agenda; b) Proximity of documents: their social, temporal and spatial proximity to what is documented; c) Origin of documents: where and how were they created, handed down or retrieved (p. 46f.). Such information is helpful to tie in the actor environment. The more adequate information is accumulated the easier it will be to arrive at authentic questions for the upcoming guideline interviews.
- **Pay attention to individual access to media infrastructure:** One of the major catalysts of change in political communication is technical innovation. Thus, implementing this factor into your research, e. g., by docking at Actor Network Theory (ANT), is of great value. The approach is

concerned with the influence of non-human (technical) factors on the social world. According to ANT, actors do not need to be human to influence other actors' doings in an active way (Johnson 1988). Although these so-called "actants" (Latour 2007) are not exclusively found in the mass media system, one may well assume quasi-acting, text communicators in a prevailing disposition within political communication (e.g. "the internet requires..."; see Marshall 2013). Besides, single human actors may well influence professional culture when introducing new ways of working. Technical skills from co-working with actants equip human actors and enable them to do their work differently.

- **Cover the relational aspect of your data:** Actors and document content are related in frame analysis. This offers means to design empirical research and carry the valuable recommendations further down the empirical path to concluding assertions. The network perspective offers ways to think about various relations between actors and documents such as a) Personal relation (e. g., author, figurational, identity, communication, addressee); b) Organizational relation (e. g., firms, team, positional, embedded); c) Discursive relation (e. g., communicational soliloquy, argumentative, repertoire); d) Content relation (e. g., uses the same building blocks, refers directly to). Actors are as well connected to other actors as to documents. Vice-versa, documents can be connected to documents and actors alike. Thus, nodes and ties are not simply arranged in a two-mode network but lie on two or more network layers (Scott 2013: 54).

### An Empirical Pathway For Frame Analysis

The following procedures provide a springboard for qualitative endeavors with frames. They may guide researchers up to a point where frame analysis leaves the straight line of preparation and permanent research issues and ventures out further. Frame coding is complex for a variety of reasons. Firstly, frames consist of a number of common building blocks which sometimes are scattered throughout a text (see section 2; Matthes 2014: 43); secondly, frames are part of media discourse and are used (and altered) over a certain period of time in a competitive fashion; thirdly—and as a result of one and two—they normally are not used as a whole, but are improved by relating to former interpretations, using symbols, reminding of incidents etc. Our idea is to select attributions as an easy way to code building block of frames and secure findings by interviewing actors behind the media texts. For this purpose we produce a range of coding rules which apply to frame complexity in section 4.1; briefly introduce needed codes in 4.2; and sketch out some ideas on queries in 4.3. Our prime aim is to record the requirements and relations for this pathway.

### Coding Rule Examples

To begin with coding the corpus, a collection of coding rules enhances the transparency of the coding phases in ATLAS.ti. We argue that coding rules are to be designed individually for each project and thus answer to theoretical and methodological needs. Yet, they are to follow provided coding techniques and analytical procedures offered by ATLAS.ti. This places them in an intersection and stimulates the researcher to potter at describing the limits provided by these set fields. Naturally, this also furthers transparency regarding the ways academic researches handle their software tools.

The following rules guide the coding procedure, and by doing so they prepare the data for later stages of the analysis. The rules below are to be understood as a mere selection of a larger collection of coding rules.

One of the most common coding issues is the rule (rule set) for 'double coded' parts of a text. An exact succession of words may by coincidence or by intention be interesting for several codes or code families. This is so for a variety of reasons: Perhaps the tagged content is found on more than one content layer (Frieze 2012: 122), or else a conceptual association between codes exist (Contreras 2011). Double-coding is also relevant for later queries and requires special attention (see section 4.3). An example from the frame "traitor to us" would be "the locals"—citizens of Heidenau—who are coded as diffuse actor as well as attribution sender (see section 4.2).

Another set of rules may be titled "Prerequisite Coding:" A code is used exclusively as dialectic partner of a second code and is only applied if a coding of the first type exists. This strategy makes sense if a special element of a text is relatively common but remains to be of no interest outside a larger paragraph code (e. g., memorized locations within a narrative part of an interview). The basic idea is to not impose a code or code family on the whole data corpus but only in a section of special interest (Mason 2002: 147). It should be clearly outlined what makes this section different from the remaining corpus (e. g., narrative vs. descriptive and argumentative parts of an interview). In contrast to the first rule set, prerequisite coding always implies different procedure levels, during which the code structure is altered. As an example we may use the attribution code: family. By definition there is only an attribution (ATT\_...) if attribution sender, receiver and subject are also coded (see section 4.2 and Figure 3).

The next two examples may well be called siblings. If complex patterns occur within theoretical spadework, coding textual data might raise questions like "do I accept a repetition of 80% of the pattern and code it again?" (Gerhards, J., Offerhaus, A., & Roose, J. 2009). This raises two questions: First, how much of an original construct is a repetition? And second, if a repetition by definition occurs, how close might this happen in terms of proximity I order to be coded again? A good example is provided by the construct of the term "meta-frame" (Schön & Rein 1994). It is defined as an entirety of all textual versions in a discourse. Surely, a document holding all aspects of a frame does not exist, and yet researchers have to decide when to use a frame code. In our example, frames are linked to attributions and are coded only if a full attribution triad is detected (see below).

A rule-set named "partial transformation" is related to adequately deal with back references and term substitutions. Such a constellation requires an understanding of multiple uses of e. g., attribution constructs. Its primary orientation is at the text-flow of primary documents for strategic reconstructions and new entries. A partially transformed attribution such as a double causal connection between politicians of a political coalition or a multiple notion of a problem that has not yet been linked to a media actor is a common example for applying this rule set. Another option would be to leave the flow of the text and decide to code these constructions on the document level only. This may also be achieved

by a flexible management of PDs in ATLAS.ti—for example, by assigning specific document names or by organizing PDs in document families.

As a rule of thumb: Whenever a coding policy is used, at least their "short form" should be available to all coder(s). This could be done by briefly indicating name and objective of the rule(s) in use. The best option here is the plain comment function within ATLAS.ti. As the collection of rules usually remain an accumulation of alternatives, it may prove handy to produce a complete version of the "rule-book" as a memo, next to "code-book," research diary, etc.

### Coding Procedure

Although Johnny Saldaña's exemplary collection of coding techniques has certainly established a valuable catalog for a number of fields. Its most prominent feature is a two-phase coding procedure: First phase coding is by and large reserved for tagging data from the text, searching for relevant content on the textual level (Saldaña 2012: 58), whereas second phase coding requires further skills like "classifying, prioritizing, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing, and theory building" (ibid.). With that it remains closer to the level of theoretical constructs. In other words, a qualitative development of codes starts with the procedures during the first cycle, covering easy-to-find text-based searches for, e. g., actors, thematic issues, argumentative reasoning, etc. In order to use it for complex frame constructs, we will have to look for frame specifics. An easy way to start is by looking for actors and attributions (Gerhards, Offerhaus & Roose 2004: 530). They come in triads, consisting of an attribution sender (a media actor or the real-world author of the document), an attribution receiver (definitely a media actor), and an attributive issue which is at stake. For our example on the path towards a power-related frame analysis, first level coding comprises therefore the two code families "actors" and "attributions."

### Coding Phase I

**AC\_ [actors]:** Originally, the sociological term "actors" dates from the 19th century. In a modern sense it denotes human beings owning rights and sharing a specific symbolization as part of their cognitive system. From common to uncommon codes, the family consists of individual actors like politicians from the government, collective actors like the whole governmental body, "hidden" or collusive actors which are not to be named in the media—for example "experts," diffuse actors which, e. g., personalize statistical measures such as "every second European," and finally, actant actors from ANT (Latour 1996: 370, see section 3). All actor codes are slim-fit codes, marking only personal pronouns, names, positions, as well as identifiable actor substitutions.

- ACT\_in\_ [individual actors]
- ACT\_kv\_ [collective actors]
- ACT\_co\_ [collusive actors]
- ACT\_di\_ [diffuse actors]
- ACT\_ac\_ [actant actors]

**AT\_ [attributions]:** Codes with attribution focus assign a special significance to related actors (see fig. 3). They have been used to mark causal and optional relations between senders and receivers of attributional issues and indicate responsibility. Further, the nature of the relation needs to be determined like: Actor A states that actor B is a cautious politician. Most of these relations can either be factual or hypothetical, positively or negatively paraphrased, resulting in a maximum number of four sub codes (Gerhards, Offerhaus & Roose 2004). Below, codes of a secondary order follow, marking the mentioned building blocks of attributions. Lastly, a group of five evaluation codes indicate a positive, indifferent or negative rating of the stated attribution.

- ATT\_ca... [factual/hypothetical positive/negative causal attribution]
- ATT\_re... [factual positive/negative responsibility attribution]
- ATT\_op... [factual/hypothetical positive/negative optional attribution]
- ATT\_ch... [factual positive/negative characteristics attribution]
- attPR\_ase [attribution sender as part of attributions]
- attPR\_are [attribution receiver as part of attributions]
- attPR\_asu [attribution subject as part of attributions]
- attEV... [attribution evaluation positive/negative]
- 

### Interviewing Actors

After coding the documents, an interview phase with actors from both sides of the interface takes place. In addition to general questions on relational aspects of individual actors such as power resources (e. g., alternative paths to knowledge), relevant questions on actor-document relations are posed; further questions concern frame content and actors' awareness of frames, production conditions and organizational embeddedness (frame building), and a detailed consideration of potentially contesting actors and contesting frames, respectively. The interviews also include probing for strategic aims/personal views connected to framing; personal estimation of documents' frames, their purpose and agendas as well as a concise personal assessment of social, temporal and spatial proximity of the frame-carrying documents.

The interview coding has a special catalytic quality. It marks, stresses, comments and highlights single quotations of various types: attributions or frames alike. As many issues can come up in the interview, we just offer a generic overview of possible interview codes below. All interview codes are prefixed with INT:

**INT\_... [interview codes]:** In-vivo/mnemonic naming of emphasis, explanation etc., given in the interviews.

### Coding Phase II

With the outcome of the first phase and the interviews we can now advance to the second coding phase in which all power-relevant attribution codes will be coded again for frame types. The quantity of additional frame codes will most likely stay below the attribution quantity—due to the obvious fact that some relevant frames use more than one attribution to repeat or modify connected components. In order to arrive at a categorization we now have to take on a different perspective, given that we now leave the



textual level and with it the realm of unequivocal certainty. Frames themselves cover one or more paragraphs; sometimes they span the entire document. A manageable grid of codes would therefore be welcome. The task can be pursued either deductively and inductively, e. g., via generic frames and topic frames instrumentalization. Generic frames are defined as exceeding any thematic limitation and admit a consistent functional view (Snow, Benford 1992; Semetko, Valkenburg 2000). Topic frames search for specific reinforced or else omitted parts. As several other options exist, this is not an explicit recommendation. Researchers can be quite flexible here and may search for various frame types (de Vreese, Lecheler 2012: 295f.). In our study, we defined the following frame codes:

**FRA\_ [frames]:** for each theoretical group of generic frames a text range is coded exclusively. Topic frames may be named directly from the text and then grouped, widened or narrowed.

**Sub codes:** generic frames (deductive)

- FRA\_P/JM\_tSB\_diag... [diagnostic frames (Snow & Benford)]
- FRA\_P/JM\_tSB\_prog... [prognostic frames (Snow & Benford)]
- FRA\_P/JM\_tSB\_moti... [motivational frames (Snow & Benford)]
- FRA\_P/JM\_tSV\_co... [conflict frame (Semetko & Vakenburg)]
- FRA\_P/JM\_tSV\_ec... [economic frame (Semetko & Vakenburg)]
- FRA\_P/JM\_tSV\_mo... [moral frame (Semetko & Vakenburg)]
- FRA\_P/JM\_tSV\_re... [responsibility frame (Semetko & Vakenburg)]
- ...

**Sub codes:** Topic frames (inductive)

- FRA\_P/JM\_o\_ind... [topic frames]

The journalistic and political side (indicated by the capital letters 'JM' and 'P') show the same number of codes. In Figure 2, a coding example is provided with a generic conflict frame from the first weeks of the refugee crisis named "traitor to us." Note that the frame-building parts are sometimes used in more ways than one; this is especially true for actor codes.

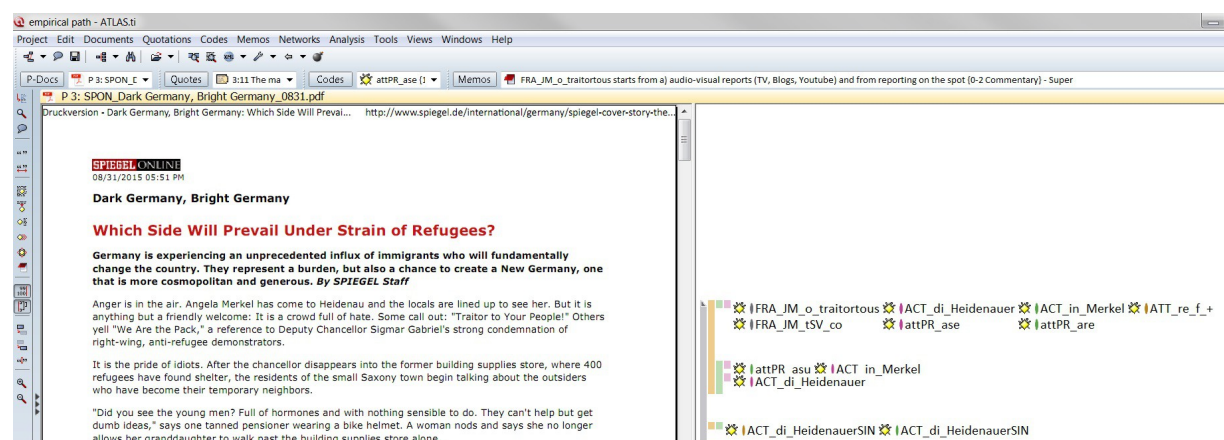


Figure 2: Coding-example for power relevant frame in ATLAS.ti: 'traitor to us'

To better illustrate the code relations from the "traitor-to-us" frame, an ATLAS.ti network can be used (Figure 3). From bottom to top: Two relevant media actors form the factual conflict frame, Chancellor Merkel stands for the inactive receiver of the attribution, whereas the citizens of Heidenau are active attribution senders. The attribution triad is complete and forms one of the building blocks of the frame displayed at the top of the network view.

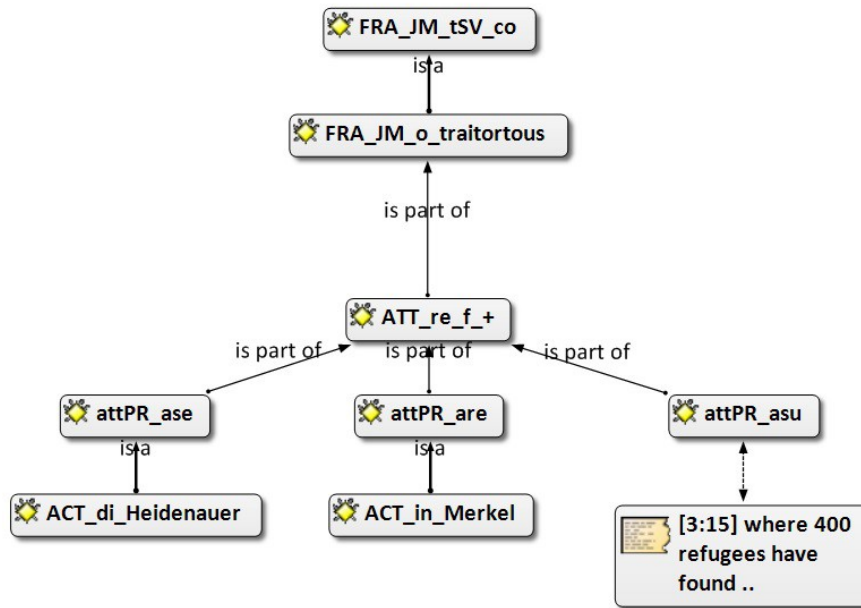


Figure 3: Relations between the codes used in PD in Figure 2

### Possible Queries Within ATLAS.ti

Whether a researcher needs to examine broader research questions or need to work on rather small assumptions, there are countless examples for queries in qualitative content analysis. This triggers the question why specific examples are presented here. On the one hand, most ideas for small-size queries occur to the researcher inductively while working with the data; this part of the empirical path is thus not a blueprint to be copy-pasted into another project. Yet again, it may prove beneficial to spread ways of handling data in various projects and accumulate knowledge on single assumptions. In order to demonstrate the "mechanics" of how we used the codes from the various groups, we will introduce two examples from working on conflict frames:

- Assumption 1a: Conflict frames carry most power-related accusations directed at individual politicians.

Assumption 1a is associated with a research question, such as "What frame types are carrying the most power-related accusations?" This is interesting to ask because the type of generic frames can inflict a certain degree of impact on direct accusations. It is different when one places an accusation from a moral

standpoint or in an acute state of conflict. We can further hypothesize that within these accusations most actors "hide" behind unidentifiable attribution senders, and do not use clearly identifiable actors for their texts.

- Assumption 1b: Because conflict frames carrying accusations are risky and may result in critical feedback, authors do use more disguised actors than in other types.

An accusation can be defined as a negative allegation that a person is guilty of acting in a certain situation/hindering someone. Working with this assumptions, a query for 1a should produce all generic frames, which actually state responsibility attributions ATT\_re with negative evaluations attEV\_ (negative); for 1b, it should show those, which are using disguised or pseudo-actors. We can combine those to ACT\_disg = (ACT\_cs\_; ACT\_di\_; ACT\_ac\_).

- Query for 1a / 1b: (((("ATT\_re\_f\_+" | "ATT\_re\_h\_+") & ("attEV\_-" | "attEV\_--")) ENCLOSSES "ACT\_disg") WITHIN ("FRA\_J\_gen" | "FRA\_P\_gen"))

The share of disguised actors can then be retrieved for other frame types analogously.

When assumptions are directed to cover strategic as well as media frames, the construction of queries always has to cover the two sides of the chosen communication interface. In a second example we concentrate attention towards considering a specific journalistic issue:

- Assumption 2: Are journalists reducing or increasing the use of personal characteristics of politicians in order to change the strategic frames within official documents during political conflicts?

Personal characteristics are instrumentalized as attribution type ATT\_ch\_...; to compile data, a query needs to indicate all factual, positive and negative characteristics of attribution senders from official documents and media texts from all conflict frames and compare them.

- Queries for 2: (("FRA\_J\_tSV\_co\_x" ENCLOSSES "attPR\_ase") & ("ATT\_ch\_f\_-" | "ATT\_ch\_f\_+")) [compare with (("FRA\_P\_tSV\_co\_x" ENCLOSSES "attPR\_ase") & ("ATT\_ch\_f\_-" | "ATT\_ch\_f\_+"))

There is a good chance that interviewed actors might have to add information on this issue. A question might probe for this:

- Associated questions during interview: "In what way do you expand or narrow personal characteristics of politicians during political crises?"

More ideas on conflict frame queries include questions like:

- Which political actors are involved with conflicts regularly?
- What are the usual press evaluations of political conflicts?
- How do political press workers present conflict partners?
- Are journalists inclined to use direct quotes from conflict parties?

## Conclusion

Power-sensitive frame analysis needs to dock at documents and "their" actors—authoring ones and named ones. This paper has provided a starting point for qualitative frame research, applicable to most frame types. It suggests how to deal with issues from the actor and the process view of framing, and unites the two so as to better grasp the power quality of framing research. A manageable way to deal with the coding procedure is to carry out two coding phases, and hold actor-interviews in-between. The first phase sows the seeds and filters textual content for smaller bits and pieces (actors, attributions, frame-parts)—fraction codes that actually search for theory-backed bigger parts of interest. The interview fosters the individual actors' views. At the end, the second phase scrapes out complex or latent variables like power-relevant frames or other frame types of interest.

To secure a rich theoretical basis, researchers are recommended to extend their literature review to any approach dealing with the handling of actors and documents, like, e. g., document analysis, discourse analysis, actor-network-theory. To apply different theoretical aspects is always a plus. However, a concise empirical perspective is needed and, quite instructively, it is found by concentrating on the emerging connections between actors and documents: a network perspective. ATLAS.ti offers a flexible network view editor which is useful in developing qualitative analysis. Yet, frame analysis could further benefit from broadened display functions, e. g., based on the groundedness of codes, or direct data entries from informants, e. g., based on the social "convoy" model (Kahn & Antonucci 1980).

A number of coding rules have been suggested to be adopted for qualitative frame analysis in order to prepare the data for the later querying process. The selection of deductive codes/code families is fundamental for qualitative frame research in particular and for diffuse constructs in general. The focal idea is to probe for common fragments of a larger relevant construct. Interviews ensure a plurality of explanatory spins in the project, as relying on content analysis procedures would remain on the usual level of named media actors and convey a mere echo of the real power grid.

Following the proposed guidelines helps to identify the most important power carrying frames, and could be a starting point for further analysis of power practices and strategies, a comparison of personal and inter-subjective views from journalists and political spokespersons, and possibly for media effect studies (audience framing) which usually is prone to quantitative empirical tools. Finally, it may be a worthwhile goal to collect empirical paths like this, establishing a catalog of procedures with ATLAS.ti.

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